

'Top of the top'

Albanian teacher gives lessons as role model

BY MIKE HUCK
STAFF WRITER

When Prek (Frank) Ivezaj finished his bachelor's degree in Yugoslavia, he was told directly by authorities that he should not expect a teaching job.

That's because he was Albanian, they said.

"That will forever stay in my mind," Ivezaj said. "I remember there was a guy at a round table. When you apply in Yugoslavia for a job, it's like going through a police station here. You have to gain clearance from them to apply. When I went there, they told me there was an opening for a teacher. They said, 'For you guys, you won't have a job.'"

Ivezaj, a newly hired bilingual teacher at Harrison High School, a social studies teacher, he previously was a paraprofessional in the bilingual department there since 1986.

Ivezaj was hired Oct. 24 to replace Dr. Jamil Metti, who took a position as Wall Lake Schools bilingual coordinator.

This spring, Ivezaj earned a bilingual endorsement on his teaching certificate from Wayne State University.

The endorsement certifies that he can teach the spectrum of bilingual students at Harrison High School.

"His specialty is Albanian," said Haroun Alameddine, director of the Farmington schools bilingual program.

Ivezaj is one of the few to attain this extra endorsement, Alameddine said.

"He's the top of the top," Alameddine said. "I met our criteria. If others weren't qualified, they weren't interviewed."

Said Director of Personnel Bob Coleman: "If we didn't hire him, somebody else would. It's not unusual to hire someone with no teaching experience."

Of 55 teachers hired this year, about 15 did not have teaching experience, he said.

Other qualities then come into play, Coleman said. "They can have a proven track record in student teaching."

Ivezaj has a B.A. from the University of Kosovo, Yugoslavia, a master's in Urban Planning from Wayne State University and a

master's in secondary education from Eastern Michigan University.

In December 1993, he received his teaching certificate from EMU. He went back in January 1994 to obtain the bilingual endorsement from Wayne State University.

Students in the bilingual program have special needs.

"Their first barrier is English," Ivezaj said.

"In two to three years, they will integrate into regular classrooms. For some, they may have command of the language but not comprehension," Ivezaj said.

Arabic, Japanese, Russian and Korean students are some of the nationalities represented at Harrison High School.

Ivezaj can speak Albanian, Serbo-Croatian (formerly Yugoslav), Russian and Macedonian. Native Albanians live in the Balkan Peninsula, half live under Yugoslavian rule, Ivezaj said.

Students who come from Japan, come for different reasons, he said. Their parents relocate here on business.

"They come here one or two years, and they go back," Ivezaj said.

By contrast, most of the people who are coming from Eastern Europe are coming to stay here.

"When I was a senior in college, I began to read about America," Ivezaj said. "I read about (U.S. President John) Kennedy, but it (the information) was reduced."

He came by himself and lived with cousins. He arrived with "zero English."

Ivezaj decided to become a teacher when he was in high school. His parents own a fruit and vegetable farm in Albania.

"They can make a decent living, if they are left alone by the Yugoslavian government," Ivezaj said.

On Nov. 28, Ivezaj and his family celebrated Flag Day in St. Paul Albanian Church in Warren where some 1,700 people attend.

"In Yugoslavia, they won't let you celebrate anything symbolic or any Albanian historical event," Ivezaj said. "We are the oldest people in the Balkan peninsula. That's why we think we are entitled to some kind of freedom."



ANNE HEALEY/STAFF PHOTOGRAPHER

Teacher's plan: Prek (Frank) Ivezaj, a newly hired bilingual teacher at Harrison High School, discusses matters with Haroun Alameddine, who is director of Farmington schools' bilingual program. Ivezaj has been a paraprofessional in the district since 1986.

Earlier this year, Farmington's Albanian speaking parents complained to the Farmington Board of Education that Farmington had no certified Albanian-speaking teachers, administrators or secretaries.

Albanian students needed a role model, they said.

"I know these students because I was here as a paraprofessional," Ivezaj said. "I'm a new teacher, in a new situation."

Ivezaj is married to Lisa, who came from Yugoslavia, when she was a year old. They have two children, Lindita, 5, and Laura, 1.

He attributes his success to supportive parents and he en-

courages the parents of his students to do likewise.

"I appreciate their effort," Ivezaj said. "They are always welcome to visit this classroom. My parents were after me all the time."

RICK SMITH
"RANGE TIPS"
68LF VIDEO

Rick Smith covers the basic elements of a great golf swing, gives you special drills and cues as well as personal techniques he uses for helping such pros as Lee Janzen, Rocco Mediate and Billy Andrade. A must have for any serious golfer.

Remaining time 15 min.

\$49.95

Call: 1-800-215-5060

UWR
UNIVERSAL WATCH REPAIR

THOUSANDS OF NEW WATCHES FOR SALE!

Starting at **\$20.00** (retail value \$150 - \$350)

Trade in your old watch!

(810) 358-2211
3001 UNIVERSITY AVE.
AT THE CORNER OF
JUNIATA AND UNIVERSITY
N.W. 100, SUITE 100

DOLL HOUSES
Sturdy Wooden Dollhouses
Cats & Furniture
Made to be Played With

SALE
10% OFF ALL PRICES

Dolls • Trains • Games & Puzzles
Scissors • Bicycles • Playmobile
Gee Saurus • Erector Sets & More!

The Doll Hospital & Toy Soldier Shop

3947 W. 12 Mile • Berkeley (810) 543-3115
MTW & Sat. 10-5:30, Th. & Fri. 10-4, Sun. 12-4

LOOKING FOR QUALITY TOYS?
For over 40 years, we have offered a meaningful alternative to major chain toy stores...

DOLL HOSPITAL
TOY SOLDIER SHOP

SALE
10% OFF ALL PRICES

1000's of imagination-provoking toys and dolls in an old-fashioned toy store setting.

3947 W. 12 Mile, Berkeley
543-3115
MTW & Sat. 10-5:30, Th. & Fri. 10-4, Sun. 12-4

Dittrich's Own Financing

Dittrich's "QUALITY" MINK JACKET
Reversible To Leather

Ladies \$1,997
Gentlemen \$2,497

Christmas Unforgettable

Holiday Reductions On Every Fur

Until Christmas: **20% Down and no payments 'til February**

Dittrich
Since 1933

1111 N. Woodward Ave.
Berkeley, MI 48008
Call 543-3115

HOLIDAY GIFT GUIDE

MOTOROLA FLIP PHONE

MODEL PCH

- 9.9 oz.
- 100 minute talk time
- 12 hours of stand-by time
- Stores up to 32 numbers
- Last number redial

\$995*

TRANSPORTABLE BAG PHONE

- Emergency Dial 9 Key
- 100 Number Alpha-numeric Memory
- Speed Dialing
- \$49.95* with battery, charger and service policy

1c*

HANDHELD PHONE

- 24 Numeric Memory
- Signal Strength Indicator
- Call-In-Absence Display
- Low Battery Alarm

\$995*

MOTOROLA FREE SPIRIT PAGER

- Tone & Vibrates
- One Button Operation
- Local, Regional & Nationwide Paging Service Available By PagerNet
- Lifetime Warranty

CAR ALARM

- By Code Alarm
- Siren
- 2 Remote Controls
- Shock Sensor
- Light Flash With Arm/Disarm
- Lifetime Warranty

HOME SECURITY SYSTEM

- FREE INSTALLATION
- 2-Door Sensors
- Interior Siren
- Battery Backup
- Protector 100

FREE \$199.95 \$99.95**

FEATURING AMERITECH CELLULAR SERVICE

The Midwest's preferred mobile phone service. Competitive rates, plans, coverage, innovation and quality. Can be used in every city in the U.S. and Canada with mobile phone services.

MetroCell Security Locations

MetroCell Security Locations at Metro 15 Fire

HOURS: Monday-Friday 9am-7pm, Saturday 9am-4pm, Sunday 11am-4pm. All major credit cards accepted.